

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state: [Translation]

(a) whether the Government are aware that the growth in exports is hindered by steep increase in interest rates in the country; and

(b) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). in the context of devaluation of the rupee in July 1991, abolition of interest subsidy and the inflationary pressure on the economy the rates of interest on export credit were revised upwards to enable the banks to extend export credit more liberally.

While export credit rates is an important factor, the export performance of the country depends on a number of factors such as quality, competitive price and delivery of goods besides nature of international demands and supplies by other countries.

New schemes have been introduced by the Government to provide pre-shipment and post-shipment credit at lower interest rates.

Smuggling at Airports/Ports

5073. SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of incidents of smuggling came to light at ports and airports of Bombay Madras, Delhi and Calcutta this year alongwith the total value of smuggled goods seized therein;

(b) whether the Government are aware that certain officers and other employees responsible for preventing smuggling are also involved in smuggling activities; and

(c) the number of such employees against whom action has been taken for their connivance with smugglers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWARTHAKUR): (a) The total number of cases of smuggling detected at ports and airports of Bombay, Madras, Delhi and Calcutta during the current financial year, (1991-92), alongwith the total value of smuggled goods seized therein are given in the table below:-

<i>Ports/Airports</i>	<i>No. of cases</i>	<i>Value (Rs. in lakhs)</i>
*Bombay Airport	7922	8821.00
*Bombay port	33	196.97
Nava Sheva Port, Bombay	1	0.35
Madras Airport	733	901.49
Madras Port	58	4.95
Delhi	487	654.56
Calcutta Port and Airport	1666	1621.53

*In addition, 124 cases involving seizure of smuggled goods valued Rs. 49.58 crores were also registered within Bombay Port and Airport limits by officers of Bombay Customs Preventive Collectorate.

(b) and (c). Four Customs officers of Delhi Customs Collectorate were found involved in the smuggling activities. They were arrested and detained under the provisions of law. Departmental disciplinary and adjudication proceedings have also been initiated against the Government officers.

[English]

Insurance Scheme for Motor Vehicles

5074. SHRI V. SOBHANA-DREESWARA RAO VADDE Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce one time payment insurance scheme for Motor Vehicles;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) to (c). The long-term policy involving one time payment of insurance premium in respect of two wheelers only, has already been introduced with effects from 1st August, 1991. The Scheme is restricted to 'Act Liability' Cover only and is voluntary at the option of the insured. The policy remains in force so long as registration of the vehicle is valid. A single premium varying from Rs. 176/- to Rs. 390/- for vehicles upto 250 C.C. and Rs. 220/- to Rs. 488/- for vehicles above 250 C.C., depending on the age of the vehicle, is collected from the insured in advance.

Value of Rupee

5075. SHRI V. SOBHANAREESWARA RAO VADDE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the value of a rupee at present treating 1947 as a base year; and

(b) the reasons for downward trend in value of rupee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b). The value of a rupee measured as the reciprocal of consumer price index for industrial workers treating 1947 as base year, is 6 paise.

The downward trend in value of rupee is attributed to the increase in prices over the years on account of supply and demand imbalances in essential commodities such as cereals, pulses, edible oils, fuels, light and lubricants, etc. Domestic production could not keep pace with growth of population and shortfalls in domestic supply could not be met through imports on account of difficult balance of payments position. Large and persistent fiscal deficit resulted in excessive growth in money supply and liquidity overhang creating pressure on demand.

[Translation]

Construction of Roads in Uttar Pradesh

5077. SHRI KASHIRAM RANA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state the names of the areas of Uttar Pradesh in which the construction work has been done under the scheme for roads of inter-State and economic importance during the year 1991-92?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT